

Re: NASA's vision lost on Web generation

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.space.shuttle/2007-01/msg00036.html>

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 - *Date:* Tue, 02 Jan 2007 23:56:41 -0600
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Jim wrote:

Wasting resources doesn't contribute to the greater good.

What resources were wasted?

The twelve figure cumulative budget involved in building and operating the shuttles. That money doesn't grow on trees.

> I know for a fact that microgravity research has

contributed to resourced management. Medical research has furthered earthbound medical research. Other benefits have been garnered from the program as well.

And compared to the cost of the program, these putative benefits have been insignificant.

What makes you think ISS was a good thing? It's primary accomplishment is to make (by comparison) the shuttle seem like a model of good policy.

Oh? What about Soyuz? What about ESA? Japan? Other international partners as well use the station for research. Soyuz spacecraft have been docked to the station constantly.

Yippee effing skip, Jim. The shuttle, at least, can point to the HST as something of nontrivial scientific value. The station has produced basically nothing of research value, and stands very little chance of doing anything of significant value.

Partners pouring their money down the rathole doesn't make it any less a rathole.

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Keep in mind when NASA realized that the shuttle could not live up to expectations billions of dollars had been spent.

NASA managers knew they were lying from the get go. They cooked the books to make the case for shuttle.

Proof? Citations?

The flight manifest they gave Mathematica to justify the shuttle was obvious nonsense. It included a military spysat launch rate based on film satellites when the military was already moving to electronic imaging satellites. It had a ridiculous set of spacelab flights with no prospect of actually paying for them.

Shuttle had no chance of being economically rational. Its purpose was to keep the iron ricebowl filled at NASA and the contractors.

Again proof? You think that the only reason the shuttle was engineered was to produce financial gain?

It was designed to produce votes and contributions for politicians (Nixon okayed it explicitly because he was worried about votes in California in 1972.) This is not the same as being of value to the country, a serious pathology of how our democracy operates.

> Then the same must be true for Mercury, Gemini,

and Apollo. What about Voyager? Pioneer? New Horizons? The mars rovers? And the others.

The unmanned scientific part of NASA is certainly expensive; I reserve judgment on whether it can really justify the cost. Apollo had the rationale of the cold war; in retrospect this rationale was flawed (the USSR collapsed from the inherent economic inefficiency of communism more than anything else), but the rationale was there.

Who determined? Anyone who compared the promises to the actual performance.

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And, no, the commissions did not make it fail, they merely recognized its failure. It could not fly at a rate that would allow it to achieve

Then why are not 737's grounded when one crashes.

Because they are actually delivering a service that's worth the cost and risk. The fact that shuttles were grounded shows that policymakers didn't really see great value in the service they were providing. The appearance trumped the substance.

competitive operational costs, much less pay back the development cost.

Competitive? Only recently have ELVs come online that can match the shuttles payload capability.

This will come as news to the DOD, which moved spysats to Titans years ago, or to the commercial customers who have long found expendables superior in cost and capability to the shuttle.

Moreover, since the shuttle proponents deliberately hindered ELV development in the US to protect their interests your complaint is akin that archetype of chutzpah, the child who, having killed his parents, asks for mercy because he's an orphan.

> But the ELVs don't have humans who can go outside and

make repairs. Reference retracting the P6 solar panels.

This putative advantage is purchased at such a cost (money *matters*, Jim) that it isn't much of an advantage at all.

BTW, it was a public admission of programmatic failure when they capped the initial production of orbiters at four. This long preceded any of the accidents.

How do you arrive at that conclusion?

If the shuttle were really going to fly at the rate they had lied about, and really was going to be delivering a vital service, they

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would have been losing shuttles frequently. The production line would have had to have been kept up. Terminating it after four showed they didn't expect the shuttle to fly very often, or that they didn't really care if it failed.

Ah, the plaintive bleat of the tax-fattened parasite. What's wrong is that the taxpayers should keep their money, not pay for useless makework.

Do you revert to name calling to make your point? Or are you just insecure?

If you do not wish to be called names, do not engage in the behavior that the names label. Your attitude of entitlement to the taxpayer's money is utterly disgusting.

Paul

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